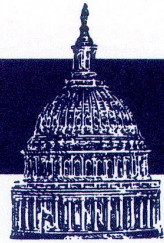




# CONGRESSMAN CURT WELDON

*7th District Pennsylvania*



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**OPENING STATEMENT OF REP. CURT WELDON  
CHAIRMAN, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
HEARING ON NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE PROGRAM  
JUNE 22, 2000**

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The subcommittee will come to order.

This morning, the Military Research and Development Subcommittee meets in open session to receive testimony on the national missile defense program. I want to welcome my distinguished ranking member and my good friend Owen Pickett and also welcome today's witness, Lt. General Ronald T. Kadish, U.S. Air Force, Director of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. General Kadish, thank you for joining us today.

Recently, long time ideological opponents of missile defense have attacked the ground-based NMD system we are now planning to deploy by claiming it will be hopelessly ineffective. These critics maintain that simple and inexpensive countermeasures will easily confuse or overwhelm the system. These criticisms are difficult to address in public because of the very sensitive nature of the technologies and capabilities involved in defeating these countermeasures. If BMDO reveals these capabilities, it may compromise them and allow rogue nations to develop the means to make their countermeasures more effective. Yet if BMDO can't address these issues to members of Congress, the critics get a free ride and support for the program may erode.

Consequently, I asked General Kadish to provide the committee and other members a classified briefing on how the NMD program is addressing countermeasures that rogue nations may be able to deploy. General Kadish came over yesterday and gave us a detailed description of a range of technologies, techniques, and phenomenologies that I believe will provide a high degree of confidence that we can defeat the expected threat both in the near term and in the future.

The purpose of the hearing today is to receive an update from BMDO on the status of the NMD program, and to explore in open session, to the extent that we can, some of the same issues we heard about in the classified briefing yesterday. I know this puts you, General Kadish, in a somewhat awkward and delicate position, so I want thank you for taking on this difficult task.

I don't want to steal any of your thunder, General, but I do want to take a few moments to provide a little more background for the members of the subcommittee. The United States has had more than four

decades of experience, both trying to develop and trying to understand how to defeat countermeasures. Our military concluded long ago that effective ballistic missile countermeasures are costly and technically very challenging.

In fact, NMD critics may be half right—some countermeasures may be cheap and easy. But that does not mean they will be effective. Anyone who claims they will be does so on the basis of incomplete information or a misunderstanding of the NMD program. In essence, cheaper and easier means easier to defeat. I would note that, although you wouldn't guess this from the press coverage, the review panel headed by retired General Larry Welch also concluded that the NMD program was on track and that technologies are available to defeat the countermeasures threat that the intelligence community—not BMDO, but the intelligence community—says we can expect to face around the middle of the decade.

Could rogue nations get better at countermeasures over time? Probably, but those countermeasures will be more expensive and technically more difficult. And the NMD program is designed for evolutionary improvement to address new threats as they arise.

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